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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

30 July 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR THE INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: SE-36/1: Soviet Capabilities for Attack on the US through Mid-1955

1. Attached are draft paragraphs 8, 9, and 13 of SE-36/1. These paragraphs have been approved by the Board pursuant to a consideration of them by the IAC representatives on 29 July.

2. You will recall that the IAC, by telephone, approved the 14 July draft of SE-36/1, except for paragraph 9. Your approval of the attached paragraphs will therefore complete IAC action.

3. In view of our commitment to the NSC, it will be necessary to clear this up before the next IAC meeting. Please let me have your concurrence by noon Friday, 31 July (Code 143, Extension 563).

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[redacted]

Executive Secretary

Distribution "A"

IAC Concurrences

AEC 30 July
JIG
State ~~31 July~~
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

30 July 1953

SUBJECT: SE-36/1: SOVIET CAPABILITIES FOR ATTACK ON THE US THROUGH MID-1955

8. Present Strength of Long-Range Aviation: Long-Range Aviation, consisting essentially of three Air Armies, one in the Far East and two in the western USSR, constitutes the strategic striking force of the USSR. The TU-4, which was copied from the American B-29, is the only Soviet bomber, known to be in operational use, capable of carrying atomic weapons to distant targets. As of 1 July 1953 a total of about 1,000 TU-4's was estimated to be available for operational use. (Table of Equipment strength of Soviet air regiments known to be equipped with or in process of being equipped with TU-4 aircraft totals 1,220 aircraft, but the TU-4 regiments are currently estimated to be at only about 80 percent of T/E strength.) As of 1 July 1953 approximately 150 TU-4's (six regiments with an aggregate T/E strength of 190) were located in the Far East. It is believed that deliveries of TU-4's to the Far East are continuing.

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9. Future Strength and Composition of Long-Range Aviation: The future strength and composition of the Soviet long-range bomber force is difficult to estimate. We have very little information on Soviet development work on new types of medium or heavy bombers. There is evidence of the development of jet medium bombers. A prototype heavy bomber probably powered by piston engines has been observed. It may ultimately be powered by turbo-prop engines. This type of aircraft is not known to be in series production. There have been recent sightings of aircraft reportedly larger than the TU-4 type. These sightings, if confirmed as heavy bomber aircraft, would establish that at least pre-series (i.e., experimental) production has begun. It seems safe to assume that the USSR is planning to replace the TU-4 piston medium bomber with aircraft of higher performance characteristics. The following table of the estimated actual strength and composition of the Soviet long-range bomber force through 1955 is based, therefore, on the assumption that the USSR will initiate series production of a jet medium bomber during the period of this estimate and that the USSR began series production of a heavy bomber in mid-1953. Intelligence presently available does not rule out the possiblity that series production of a heavy bomber could have started early in 1953.

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ESTIMATED ACTUAL STRENGTH

| | Mid-1953 | Mid-1954 | Mid-1955 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Medium Bomber | | | |
| Jet | -- | -- | 50 |
| Piston | 1,000 | 1,220* | 1,050 |
| Heavy Bomber | ** | 30 | 200 |
| Total | 1,000 | 1,250 | 1,300 |

13. Future Jet Medium Bomber Characteristics: It is estimated that a jet medium bomber could appear in operational use some time in 1955. Such a bomber would have improved altitude and speed characteristics, but less range than a TU-4. Although little intelligence is available in this field, it has been calculated that such an aircraft might have a combat radius of 1,500 and a combat range of 2,900 nautical miles carrying a 10,000 pound bomb load. A Soviet jet medium bomber having these characteristics could reach targets in the United States only on a one-way mission from the Chukotski base area. On such a mission it could reach targets located north of an arc roughly passing through Los Angeles, Denver, and Minneapolis.

* 100 percent of T/E strength.

** Possibly a few not in operational units.



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